Virgil, *The Aeneid,* interpreted fromlines 777-853

And a child of Mars will join the group to accompany all,

Romulus, to whom his mother Ilia gave birth,

Look at how Mars twin plumes stand on his crest[[1]](#footnote-1), and how

his father the god marks him out for glory?

Look, under his command glorious Rome

will follow earth’s power and heaven’s will, and encircle

seven hills with a single wall[[2]](#footnote-2)…

…

Now direct your eyes here, gaze at this people, your own Romans. Here is Caesar, and all the offspring of Iulus[[3]](#footnote-3) destined to live under the pole of heaven.

This is the man, this is him, whom you so often hear

promised you, Augustus[[4]](#footnote-4) Caesar, son of the Deified,

who will make a Golden Age again in the fields

where Saturn once reigned, and to extend the empire beyond

The Libyans[[5]](#footnote-5) and the Indians, even the Egyptians.

Look at that man, who will extend Rome’s lands

so much more than Hercules ever crossed.

Over there is Numa, a king of Rome, who will first secure our city

under the rule of law. Then Tullus will be the next king

who makes war over the land. Then Ancus will next be crowned,

And then come the proud Tarquins who rule

until Brutus the avenger of Lucretia, who was raped by the proud Tarquin clan,

brings us all the republic and the freedom of the people.

Brutus will be the first consul to hold the axes and the rods.

There’s Mummius, the victor over Corinth[[6]](#footnote-6), and Aemilius Paulus,

who will destroy Greek Mycenae. There is Cato,

the uncompromising politician, and the Gracchi,

hero-politicians of the people who died as martyrs.

There is Scipio Africanus[[7]](#footnote-7), conqueror of Carthage,

victor of the Punic War against vicious Hannibal.

*Background information: Aeneas must travel into the Underworld in order to hear a prophesy from the gods that will tell him where he must land his group of Trojans who had fled from Troy. After wandering in the Mediterranean for many years, Aeneas now has to find out where to settle and what the future has in store for him. Thus he goes to see his father Anchises in the Underworld, and Anchises shows him this procession of future Roman heroes and leaders that will come. This is the prophesy; Aeneas sees the future glory of Rome in these figures.*

1. Crest: a painting, typically on a shield, that shows a family’s history and symbols [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. They are describing the topography of Rome: seven hills of Rome and the wall of Rome that Romulus builds. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Iulus is the future son of Aeneas, who will be the ancestor of the line of people that runs through Romulus all the way to Caesar. He is saying that Aeneas is the ancestor of Julius Caesar. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Future first emperor of the Roman Empire, who brought the “Roman Peace” to the Empire. Augustus paid for Virgil to write the Aeneid. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Tribe of people from North Africa (around where modern Libya is today) [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Mummius conquered Corinth and burned the powerful Greek city to the ground in 148 B.C. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Scipio Africanus fought and beat Carthage in the 2nd Punic War in 202 BCE in Africa. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)